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The Doll That Saved an Army

An Historical Play in Four Scenes

By
EDYTH M. WORMWOOD

BOSTON
WALTER H. BAKER & CO.

1916

The Doll That Saved an Army

CHARACTERS

CAPT. ROBERTSON, *of Washington's Army.*
JOHN WINSLOW, *his brother-in-law.*
JAMES ELLIS, *Washington's messenger.*
JAKE PERKINS, *Capt. Robertson's hired man.*
GEN. WASHINGTON.
MATTHEWS, *of Washington's Army.*
HALL } *British soldiers who are*
TURNER } *after Ellis.*
CAPT. BLAKE }
MAXWELL } *British soldiers*
HURLEY } *in the woods.*
PRESTON }
MRS. ROBERTSON, *the Captain's wife.*
REBECCA } *her daughters.*
RHODA }
JANE, *her hired girl; very red-faced.*
SUSAN BURNS } *neighbors' daughters.*
MARY BENNETT }

NOTE

Eighteen characters—twelve male, six female—are called for, but the play can be given by a less number by doubling—giving Jane's part to Mary or Susan, and letting Hall and Turner take the parts of Hurley and Preston also. Capt. Robertson and Matthews might also take the parts of Capt. Blake and Maxwell. In this way, five characters would be eliminated, making only thirteen required. Of course, as large a number of soldiers as desired may take part.



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The Doll That Saved an Army

SCENE I.—*A well-furnished sitting-room of Colonial style.*

(RHODA, REBECCA, SUSAN BURNS and MARY BENNETT are seated, primly sewing or knitting.)

MARY. And so General Washington is really to come to our little town. Only think of our actually seeing him!

RHO. Yes, all the town will want to see him, I'm sure. We're all loyal in this town—loyal patriots, I mean, not loyal to King George.

SUSAN. But I suppose he's really our king still, isn't he?

REB. Indeed he isn't, Susan—not since the Declaration of Independence. General Washington is our leader, and I presume he'll be our king when we've conquered, as we surely will.

SUSAN. But suppose he doesn't conquer? Suppose he is conquered?

MARY. Suppose your grandmother's tabby cat was pea green! Of course he'll conquer!

SUSAN. But if he didn't—if the British conquer, Washington would be only a rebel, and would be hung for a traitor, or beheaded. My uncle said so.

RHO. All great men are rebels against injustice, as they should be; but right conquers in the end. Don't talk like a Tory, Susan.

SUSAN. Who's a Tory?

REB. No one in this town, surely. If there were one, he'd certainly be tarred and feathered and ridden on a rail out of the town in short order.

MARY. Of course every one is anxious to see the General.

RHO. And he'll be here to tea with father, and Rebecca and I are to wait on the table, in our best delaines and our ruffled black silk aprons.

MARY. Only think of waiting on General Washington! How proud you girls must be. I'm sure I should be so nervous that I'd spill his tea, or make some absurd blunder.

SUSAN. You usually do, Mary, so you probably would.

MARY. I didn't ask your opinion, Susan Burns.

SUSAN. No, I offered it. You're welcome. But you wouldn't spill his tea, because there won't be any to spill.

REB. Yes, there will. Mother has a little saved for illness, and of course we're proud to serve it to our great commander.

SUSAN. What's he coming to your house for, anyway? You're not the only people in town, are you?

RHO. Why, no, Susan. What makes you so disagreeable this afternoon? Father is coming on a flying visit, and Washington, being with him, will naturally come to his home.

REB. As I understand it, Washington, being so near, is coming to publicly and personally thank the town for the large number of men it has furnished him.

MARY. And horses and money. Every one has given all he could.

RHO. I should say so. There's scarcely a man left in town—or boy, either, for that matter, if he's old enough to carry a musket, and can squeeze into the army by the skin of his teeth. You see, the camp, for a while, is to be only ten miles from here, and as the British are all some fifty miles to the south, it is a good time to come. They won't stay all night, though.

MARY. Think of owning a chair that General Washington has sat in! A plate he has eaten from! A knife he has handled! You'll pass them down to your descendants, girls, as great treasures.

SUSAN. Don't go into fits, Mary. It wearies one to listen. Of course Washington is a good man and a brave soldier, but why should every one behave as if he were a little tin god on wheels? My Uncle Enos says he wouldn't fall down and worship any man.

MARY. Nor God, either, I should say, from his regular absence from the meeting-house on the Sabbath day.

SUSAN. I don't know as it is your affair, Mary Bennett, if my uncle doesn't go to meeting. There is no law, now, to force a man to go.

MARY. Indeed, I've no wish to do so. I'm much more comfortable out of his presence than in it. I never saw so surly a man.

REB. Oh, Mary! He's Susan's uncle.

MARY. There, Susan, I beg your pardon, I'm sure. I don't mean half I say. It's just my quick tongue that's always

getting me into trouble. But, really, your uncle shouldn't speak so of General Washington, and if he does, you shouldn't repeat it; it sounds Toryish.

SUSAN (*rising*). I shan't stay here to be insulted, or to hear my folks insulted.

RHO. (*rising, and going to SUSAN*). There, Susan, don't be silly! Mary is quick-tempered, but we all know how to take her.

SUSAN. Silly, am I, Rhoda Robertson? I'll not prolong my call, I think. Good-afternoon.

(*She catches up her sunbonnet, and goes out, slamming door.*)

REB. Now she's gone home offended. What will mother say? She'll think we were not polite to her.

MARY. Well, I wasn't, and I don't care a bit, but my mother will. The Burns's are so easily offended, and mother says we should all be friends in this time of storm and stress. If your mother should tell her, I'll have forty yards of a stocking to knit, or an acre of patchwork to sew over and over. Those are always my punishments, because I hate them so.

MRS. ROBERTSON (*entering*). And what should I care to tell your mother, my dear, that would cause her to punish you? I hope you do not conceal things from your dear mother, Mary.

MARY. Oh, I told Susan Burns that her Uncle Enos was the surliest man I ever saw, and she's gone home in a pet.

MRS. R. Why, my dear Mary, how unladylike to speak so of her kinsfolk!

RHO. Susan was to blame, mother. She said mean things of General Washington, and said that her Uncle Enos said so.

MRS. R. Of General Washington?

REB. Yes, she said we all fell down and worshipped him.

MARY. And she called him a little tin god on wheels.

MRS. R. But her uncle was not to blame for that. He cannot help what Susan says.

REB. Yes, he is to blame, mother. He said it first.

MRS. R. Enos Burns said that! Are you sure, Rebecca?

MARY. Susan said he did. And I said it sounded Toryish.

REB. And it does sound so.

MRS. R. But you should not have been rude because Susan was rude, my dear, and I am very sorry it happened here in my house. The Burns family are very sensitive, you know, and it is a time when no quarrels should be stirred up. I am sorry

you expressed your opinion of Mr. Burns so freely, Mary. A young girl should speak respectfully of her elders, or not at all. Come out to tea with us, now, my dear, and let it pass. Tea is waiting.

RHO. All but the tea.

(All pass out together.)

CURTAIN

SCENE II.—*Same room. It is evening, and candles are burning.*

(MRS. R. is seated in a large chair by the table, knitting. A large box couch is at one side of the room. JOHN WINSLOW, with his arm in a sling, sits uneasily on the edge of it. Enter RHO. and REB., with shawls and bonnets on.)

RHO. We're ready, Uncle John.

WIN. So I see. I wish I didn't see. Tell you what, girls, I'll see you over and wait for you outside.

REB. The idea!

WIN. Well, I can't afford to be drawn into girls' tea-fights. Better let it rest, Sarah. As near as I can make out, it wasn't their funeral, anyway. 'Twas Mary's.

MRS. R. But Susan left here angry at Rhoda, as well, and Mr. Burns is a very quick-tempered man, and sullen, as well. No community should be divided at such a time, and I want the girls to make peace with Susan.

WIN. I fear I'm but a poor peacemaker, Sarah. All my thoughts are of war, and it angers me to see an able-bodied man like Enos Burns staying at home when he is needed elsewhere. It doesn't look very patriotic.

MRS. R. All the more reason not to quarrel with him.

WIN. The very reason why I might. But I believe in a man's doing a man's work. Dr. Pratt says my sling may come off to-morrow, and then I'll hurry back to the front, with Tom and the General.

MRS. R. But you'll escort the girls?

WIN. Certainly, Sarah, if you wish it, though I don't approve of the expedition.

MRS. R. Now, girls, make Mr. Burns understand that no insult was intended, that it was only Mary's rash tongue.

WIN. You don't know Enos Burns as well as I do, Sarah, or you'd know he couldn't be made to understand anything when he once got a different notion into his mule head. But here goes to try. Come on, girls.

(WIN. and girls pass out. MRS. R. sits down again and begins to knit and to sing. Let her sing "Robin Adair," or some song equally old. Suddenly she jumps to her feet, as a hurried knock is heard. She goes to door and opens it. JAMES ELLIS enters quickly, closes and bolts door, and sinks down in chair.)

MRS. R. Who are you, sir, and why do you enter my house in this unseemly manner?

ELLIS. I'm a soldier of the patriot army, madam. My name is James Ellis. I carry important papers to General Washington, whom I was told to meet at this house to-morrow night. I ran into a couple of Redcoats, though I thought there weren't any within fifty miles. They tried to capture me. I hope they will follow my horse, which has gone straight on. He will run some time, now he is started. Hark! I hear their horses' feet. They must not get my papers.

MRS. R. (*going to couch and lifting lid*). In with you, quickly! (*He does so, and she shuts it.*) Jane! Jane!

JANE (*entering*). Marm? Did you call me?

MRS. R. Yes, I did. (*Arranges couch.*) Lie down here, quickly, Jane, and ask no questions. I'll explain later. Tie this around your ahead. (*Hands her a large handkerchief from her basket. JANE ties it on, and MRS. R. drenches it with camphor from a bottle which she takes from a closet.*) You're ill, Jane, very ill. Turn and moan if any one comes in, but don't speak. (*JANE nods. A knock is heard. MRS. R. pours some of the camphor into a glass, places a paper and spoon over it, then goes to door, where the knocking has continued. As she opens door, HALL and TURNER push by her into the room.*) What do you mean, sirs, by this unseemly entrance?

TURNER. Has any stranger been here to-night?

MRS. R. Yourselves, sir. If any more come, I shall not open the door, as it seems that ungentlemanly strangers are abroad.

HALL. Beg pardon, ma'am, but our business is very important.

MRS. R. You can have no business with me, important or otherwise. No British soldier has any business in this house, or in this town, for that matter. Indeed, sirs, I should advise you to take yourselves off as quickly as possible, if you do not wish to be captured. You are a long way from your lines, and we are all patriots here.

TURNER. We'll risk it for a minute or two. Have you heard any one ride by?

MRS. R. A horse went by a few minutes ago. He seemed to be going very fast, as I advise you to do. Better follow him.

HALL. So we will. Which way did he go?

MRS. R. I did not raise the curtains to see. It sounded as though he turned off just beyond here, and struck across the fields. There is an old road there. The footsteps sounded lighter after they passed.

HALL. The tracks would show, Turner. Will you lend us a lantern, madam?

MRS. R. Certainly, sir. Have you lost a comrade?

TURNER. What ails the girl? (MRS. R. *steps out without answering*. JANE *tosses and moans*. MRS. R. *returns quickly with a lantern, which she lights by a candle*. TURNER *takes it*.) Thank you, madam. We'll catch the rebel yet.

MRS. R. Is it a patriot you are chasing?

HALL. No, a rebel.

MRS. R. (*indignantly*). I shall not help you capture one of our brave boys. Why! It might be my own son! I thought you were trying to find a lost comrade. Give back the lantern.

TURNER. No, thank you, dear lady, we really need it, you see, and you have assisted us by telling us which way to go.

MRS. R. I may have been mistaken.

(JANE *moans and mutters, "Water."*)

HALL. What ails the girl?

MRS. R. We are not sure yet. We hope it's not serious, but there's a good deal of typhus fever about, and a sprinkling of smallpox. She hasn't broken out any yet, but her face is very flushed.

HALL. Why did you let us in if you had a contagious disease in your house?

MRS. R. If you will pause to consider, sir, you will remember that you entered without an invitation.

TURNER. She's right, Hall, we did. Let's be getting out. Smallpox or typhus, whichever it is, we don't want it.

MRS. R. I hardly think you will take it, sir. We have plenty of camphor around.

TURNER. Camphor be blessed. It's out for me. Come, Hall.

(They go out quickly, and are heard speaking to their horses, as they mount and ride away.)

JANE *(rising)*. There, marm, for once in my life I'm glad my face is as red as a cranberry. It sent them lobster-backs about their business. But what in the world — *(Stares at ELLIS, who is crawling out of box.)* And was it Jane Morrill that saved one of our own brave boys from the enemy? Glory be!

ELLIS. I thank you for your kind protection, my girl.

JANE. You're kindly welcome, sir, though I never knew you were there at all. *(Sniffs.)* Ah! my pies are burning!

(Hurries out.)

ELLIS. It seems good to have room to stretch and air to breathe. It was like being in a coffin. But you sent the Redcoats in the right direction.

MRS. R. Yes. The road your horse took leads to a swamp. Your horse may possibly perish there, but the Redcoats, if they are not caught in the quicksands, will not get out without help, and when they do, they will be prisoners. They will trouble us no more to-night, sir. *(Voices are heard. MRS. R. unbolts door.)* It is only my brother and my daughters.

Enter WIN. and the girls.

ELLIS. Jack Winslow!

WIN. Jim Ellis! How in the world came you here?

ELLIS. Run in by the Redcoats.

WIN. Redcoats! After you?

ELLIS. No, they're after my horse now.

MRS. R. Are you not back very soon?

REB. Yes, mother, we didn't go in.

RHO. Oh, mother, such a dreadful discovery!

WIN. Yes, Sarah, we have bad news, indeed. To begin with, Enos Burns is a traitor and a Tory, and Thomas Lee is another.

MRS. R. Are you sure, John?

RHO. We heard them, mother. Mr. Burns was raving mad, and he swore to Mr. Lee that he'd be willing to crawl twenty miles on his hands and knees to bring the British to capture father and General Washington.

MRS. R. How did you come to hear them?

WIN. They were in the stable, saddling the grays, and were too excited to lower their voices as much as they no doubt intended. They are off to tell the British that Tom and the General are coming here to-morrow night, and they will surround the house, and capture us.

MRS. R. Washington must not come, nor Thomas, either. We must warn them.

ELLIS. But this detachment of British to whom my pursuers belong! They are between us and the camp. Burns will meet and warn them, and no one will be allowed to pass their line, lest they warn the General.

MRS. R. But we must warn them. They must not come here to be caught like rats in a trap.

RHO. I know how, mother.

WIN. You!

RHO. Yes, I know how. A plan just came to me. You want to get back into the army, Uncle John?

ELLIS. And I must get my dispatches through.

RHO. Dispatches? Wait a minute. Oh, I know. Could you and Uncle John be real green country bumpkins?

WIN. Why, Rhoda, why should we?

RHO. Rebecca and I can play the ignorant country girl to perfection—the real poor white, you know. We've done it in theatricals, and we often do it for fun. We have our costumes, too. You'll have to sacrifice your uniforms in favor of jeans, but——

ELLIS. Why not the jeans over the uniforms?

RHO. Because we shall probably be captured and searched, and the uniforms would be a dead give-away. Surely you are of more importance to our General than your uniforms. Besides, we will send them to you at the first opportunity.

ELLIS. But why should you girls go?

RHO. To avert suspicion. We'll elope, and take Jake with us. Jake can take off foolish Joe to perfection. We have eloped with you, telling our folks (who live out Cedar Hill way) that we were going to see a friend. Susan Haskell, her name shall be, principally because we don't know any Susan Haskell. Once in Elmwood, we intend to hunt up a parson.

REB. Really, once in Elmwood, the rest would be easy.

ELLIS. I should feel highly honored to be allowed to clope with you, Miss Rebecca. But how about my dispatches?

MRS. R. Are they large?

ELLIS. Not at all.

MRS. R. Certainly you must not carry them. You are almost certain to be captured and searched. If nothing is found, and you act your parts well, I see no reason why they should not let you go. Give me your papers, and I will find a safe hiding-place for them. (ELLIS removes coat and waistcoat, and rips lining of latter, taking out papers.) The very first place they would look for them. Call Jake, John. (WIN. goes out. MRS. R. is lost in thought a moment.) Rhoda!

RHO. Yes, mother?

MRS. R. Bring me your old rag doll.

RHO. Why——

MRS. R. Do not stop to question. Bring her at once.

RHO. (going out). Yes, mother.

(MRS. R. goes to work-basket, selects needle, thread, thimble and scissors, seats herself. RHO. returns with doll.

MRS. R. takes doll, removes part of her clothing, rips hole in shoulder.)

REB. You're not going to put them in there, are you, mother?

MRS. R. I certainly am, my dear.

RHO. But I'm much too big to carry a doll, mother. I haven't played with Samantha for an age. Besides, I couldn't carry a doll when I was running away to be married. They would certainly suspect something.

(MRS. R. rubs her needleful of thread on the floor, holds it up to look at it, repeats her action, then removes some of the material with which the body is stuffed, tucks in the papers, folded small, puts back part of the stuffing, and sews the shoulder up again, then dresses her. The conversation goes on while she does so.)

MRS. R. We must think of a good reason for taking her. You might be going to return the doll, which your friend's little sister forgot when she was here, or—stay, this is better still—you can take her, in a bundle, of course, because she is an old keepsake, and you couldn't bear to leave her. Rebecca

can take that old green fairy book, to lend countenance to the doll. When you return to Elmwood, remain at Mrs. Burleigh's till I send for you, if there is any doubt that the British have left. It will not be long ere they will find that General Washington is not coming, and will go away. Here comes Jake.

Enter WIN. and JAKE PERKINS.

JAKE. Here I am, marm.

RHO. Jake, to-night you are not more than half-witted, though not quite a fool.

JAKE. Thank you for the compliment, miss, I'm sure. That means, I suppose, that I'm to act a little more thick-headed than I really am.

REB. Exactly, only more so. Play half-witted Joe. You know how.

MRS. R. It is to save my husband and General Washington from capture and death.

JAKE. Then you can have anything I have, or am, or can be, or do, marm, even to my life.

WIN. You see, Jake, we want to get through to warn Washington that the British have a plan to capture him—the British and Enos Burns, aided by Thomas Lee.

JAKE. Well, I never thought much of that Burns chap. So he's come out and showed his colors at last, has he? He's a Tory?

WIN. Yes, and a traitor. And as Ellis and I must stay with the army when we reach it, you must go to see that the girls get back safely.

JAKE. Why take the gals at all?

MRS. R. I believe they will be your safeguard.

RHO. So we're eloping with Uncle John and Mr. Ellis, and you're our uncle, who has overheard our plans, but has been bribed to help them through in return for all the rum you can hold. You're very fond of rum, you know.

JAKE. I'm sure I'm not such a heavy drinker.

RHO. Yes, you are, to-night, at least. You'd do anything for a glass of rum.

JAKE. I see.

ELLIS. Then hunt us up some toggery, like yours, while we explain the plan more fully.

JAKE. All right. Come on, then.

WIN. And you girls get into your clothes as quickly as you

can. We must reach camp, and you must get back as far as Elmwood before daylight.

MRS. R. You think you can do it, Jake?

JAKE. Trust me, marin. I'll bring them safely back to you.

MRS. R. Oh, I hope so, Jake. I trust so, but it is hard to let them go right into the hands of the British. There! It is the only way, and I will let them go, and trust in the Lord. I would give them to their country if they were boys, even as I gave my husband and brother. You are patriots, too, girls.

RHO. Indeed we are, and only think if we could save father's life!

REB. And General Washington. What would the country do without him? Come help us get ready, mother. We're glad to do it for our country.

WIN. That's it, girls. That's the watchword of every true patriot—"For our country." Hurry, now. Time's going.

(The girls go out, followed by their mother, with the doll.)

ELLIS. And now for our jeans, Jake. We'll get through, I think.

JAKE. Where wits are weapons, his that wins must needs be sharp. I'll back my wits against any old Redback's. Come into my room, and we'll be ready in a jiffy.

(They pass out.)

CURTAIN

SCENE III.—*A woodland scene. Tent in background, before which PRESTON paces up and down.*

(Enter HURLEY, with WIN., ELLIS, RHO., REB., and JAKE.

HUR. walks last, guarding them. The men wear frocks and overalls of blue or butternut jean. The girls wear faded calicoes or homespuns and sunbonnets. Each carries a bundle. RHO.'s is the larger.)

PRES. What have you there, Hurley?

HUR. Blest if I know! See what you can make of them, Preston. Captain Blake said to let no one pass, but blamed if I believe he meant fools and love-sick idiots!

JAKE. Who's a fool? You? I've allus wanted to see one. Say! (*To PRES.*) Which'd you ruther, seem to be a bigger fool'n you be, or be a bigger fool'n you seem to be?

PRES. (*ignoring him*). Where are you going?

WIN. To Ellunwood.

(JAKE *pushes in between, and repeats his question.* PRES. *ignores him.*)

PRES. Where are you from?

WIN. Back a piece.

(JAKE *pushes in, and repeats his question a third time.*)

PRES. Oh, shut up! I couldn't be as big a one as you are, anyway I tried.

JAKE. But which'd you ruther, really?

HUR. Oh, answer him, Preston. He'll keep it up till you do.

JAKE. Yes, which'd you ruther? (*Repeats question.*)

PRES. (*impatiently*). Well, then, I'd rather seem to be a bigger fool than I am.

JAKE. You couldn't. (*Laughs uproariously.*)

HUR. And I chose the other way, but he gave me the same answer.

JAKE. Pretty good, eh? Try it on the Captain.

PRES. Yes, I see myself trying it. Now keep your foolish tongue in your head, old chap, or it will be the worse for you. Now, then, you folks, right about face and go back where you came from. No one can pass here to-night.

REB. We can't go back.

HUR. Oh, I guess you can. The road's there, Sukey.

WIN. Her name isn't Sukey. It's Becky.

HUR. Oh, she's Becky, is she? Well, Miss Becky, you can't pass here to-night.

ELLIS. Look a-here, now. This 'ere wood ain't yourn, and 'twon't be any coin outer your wallet if we do walk along here. We gotter git to Ellunwood to-night.

HUR. What's your hurry? To-morrow will do as well.

RHO. 'Twon't, nuther. Dad may ketch us. Would you want to be ketched if you was 'loping?

PRES. Loping? Are you hares, or what?

REB. She means *el*-loping, mister, running away to git spliced.

PRES. Spliced?

JAKE. Married, you ignoramus. Can't you understand English?

PRES. Married! You girls aren't more than fourteen. Married!

REB. Yes, we be, mister, truly. I'm seventeen, a'most, and Rhody's going on sixteen.

PRES. Very old, indeed. And your daddy objects, eh?

RHO. He says as how we're too young for sweethearts, so we cleared out.

HUR. What's your father's name?

RHO. Perkins—Josiah Perkins. This is my sweetheart, Si Slocum.

REB. And this is mine—Azariah Doolittle. Let us pass, mister. We won't hurt you none. S'pose'n 'twas you?

PRES. Does it take three men to marry two girls, or is this the parson?

JAKE. No, I hain't no parson. I'll meet my sweetheart over yonder.

HUR. Is she dead? Is that what cracked your brain?

JAKE (*rubbing his head*). 'Tain't cracked as I knows on. No, she hain't dead, I hope. She's over yonder, in Ellumwood, to the tavern.

PRES. A barmaid, eh? What's her name?

JAKE. Rum.

PRES. What?

JAKE. Rum. A bottle of rum is a better sweetheart than any fool gal, an' don't you furgit it.

PRES. Why did you bring that old fool with you?

WIN. (*sulkily*). Had to.

ELLIS. Couldn't help it.

JAKE. Guess you couldn't, Azzie.

REB. He listened, old eavesdropper!

RHO. And we had to bring him along to keep him quiet. (*To PRES.*) Do let us pass, sir. Maybe you've a sweetheart across the water.

PRES. Many of them, my dear, but none of them as young and pretty as you.

(*RHO. simpers.*)

WIN. Say, man, look a-here! That's my gal, and you let her be.

PRES. Don't fly off the handle, friend. I didn't touch her.

WIN. Wal, you looked as ef you wanted to eat her.

PRES. Or kiss her, eh?

WIN. Jest you try it. I don't 'low nobody to kiss my gal. Rhody, you come over here side o' me.

(She does so, with a coquettish glance at PRES. Both couples back off a little, and "spoon.")

HUR. No use to edge off, and then run. If you do, I shall shoot.

ELLIS. You wouldn't shoot a gal, would you?

HUR. Sure, if she disobeyed orders.

ELLIS. We won't try to run away. Put up that gun. It might go off by accident, like.

HUR. Guess I'll keep it handy.

PRES. *(turning suddenly on JAKE)*. What's this trip for, anyway?

JAKE *(staring)*. Har?

PRES. What's this trip for? Why are you going to Elmwood?

JAKE. Rum.

HUR. I thought it was a wedding party.

JAKE. So 'tis, but I'm no bride, nor bridy-grum, nuther. I'm chapperony.

PRES. You look it.

JAKE. Wal, I be. I'm uncle to them ar gals.

PRES. They don't take after you much. They're good-looking.

JAKE. Wal, you don't know how harnsome I was when I was a young buck.

HUR. No, we don't. What are you going to Elmwood for?

JAKE. Rum, I told you. What makes you ask forty-'leven times?

PRES. You aren't trying to get through to join the army?

JAKE. Now, look a-here, young man, I hain't a-gwine to jine no army. S'pose'n I got my head shot off? How'd I drink my rum?

HUR. Can't you think of anything but rum?

JAKE. Rum's wuth a-thinkin' on, young chap. Rum's meat and drink and friends and clothing. Don't you sneer at rum, now. I won't stand it.

PRES. And the young men aren't recruits?

JAKE. What's that ar word?

PRES. Recruits. They aren't going into the army?

JAKE. Guess not. They're gun shy. Feered they might git hit, you know. Don't blame 'em a mite. What's the sense of making a target of yourself for some one to shoot at? If the Britishers want to shoot, why don't they shoot rabbits? What's the sense of shooting live men?

HUR. (*sharply*). Here, you! Stop lovering, and come here.

ELLIS. Here we be, sir. Don't shoot.

HUR. Now, where's Washington?

ELLIS. How in thunder should I know? He hain't here, and I'm sure I don't want to see him here. He wants every man to jine his army and git killed to death with a musket.

WIN. 'N we be n't a-gwine to jine your side, nuther. 'Twould hurt jest as bad to be shot with a Yankee musket as a British one.

HUR. Coward!

WIN. Coward yourself! We're peaceable farmers. I'd ruther be a live coward than a dead general any day, 'n' I want to get out of here some time to-night, 'stead of answering fool questions.

PRES. Oh, you do? (*Suddenly.*) Right about face! Forward march!

WIN. Have you gone clean crazy? What's all that dol-de-diddle?

HUR. They're no soldiers, Preston, they never batted an eye. Just stared, like the blockheads they are. (*To ELLIS.*) Do you carry a message to any one?

ELLIS. No, I'm no arrand boy. I got a message o' my own for the parson, if ever I git there.

PRES. (*to WIN.*). Or you?

WIN. Yes, we're a-gwine to the parson, too. Be n't we, Rhody?

(*RHO. simpers, looks down, then casts sheep's eyes at PRES.*)

HUR. Do you carry any message?

WIN. No; how could we? Nobody knew we was a-coming. We run away, I told you.

HUR. (*to JAKE*). And you don't carry any message?

JAKE. Yes, I do, too, now. You guessed wrong that time.

HUR. What is the message?

JAKE. I'm to tell the tavern-keeper in Ellumwood to give me all the rum I kin drink, and these young larks'll pay for't. Tell you, I kin hold a heap.

HUR. Oh, rum again! The fool hasn't a thought above rum!

JAKE. You can't git above rum, young chap. You may think you're a-doing it, but fust thing you know, you're under the table with rum a-top. Ever try it?

HUR. Hang it all! I'm not interested in your drunken sprees. Have you any other message?

JAKE. No, 'n' as long's I know that one I don't need no nuther. Say, why's Berlin the gayest city in the world? 'Cause it's always on the Spree. Haw, haw! Ain't that a good one?

PRES. Oh, let them go. No sense in keeping them.

REB. Yes, do. We're in a big hurry, and you're bothering us awfully.

HUR. But if they should be carrying messages?

PRES. No one would send a message by any of this party, I'm sure.

HUR. Or papers.

PRES. If! Well, search them and let them go. (*Raises voice.*) Maxwell! (*A soldier comes forward.*) Tell Captain Blake we have some prisoners we'd like to search in his tent. (*Soldier retires.*) Now, my men, you've no objection to being searched?

ELLIS. Wal, I don't want my wallet took away. I got to pay the parson.

(CAPT. BLAKE *comes from tent.*)

CAPT. B. What's this, Hurley? We can't search girls. We've no women with us.

HUR. No, sir, but we thought perhaps we'd better go through the form of searching the men, though I think they're safe enough.

CAPT. B. Men of importance to us would hardly travel with girls to encumber their movements. Go ahead, though. Maxwell and Upton will assist you. (*HUR. marches the men before him into the tent.*) Why are they going through here so late?

PRES. The young couples are eloping, sir, and the old half-

witted one found them out and was taken along to prevent his spoiling sport. He's to be silenced by rum. He seems to eat rum, drink rum, dream rum, and worship rum.

REB. Don't shoot 'em, sir. They didn't mean no harm.

CAPT. B. They shall not be hurt. So you are going to get married?

REB. Yes, we be, if you mean old Britishers don't keep us till our step-daddy misses us and comes after us.

CAPT. B. But you are too young to be married.

REB. Young yourself. Aren't you married? And don't you like it?

CAPT. B. Yes, I am married, and of course —

REB. Then don't meddle with other folks' baking.

CAPT. B. I won't. I've no time to waste on girls like you, and if I stopped you, you would try it again.

REB. Of course.

CAPT. B. Will you give me your word that you have no papers concealed in your clothing?

REB. No, I haven't, sir. Why should I?

CAPT. B. (to RHO.). And you?

RHO. I haven't got none. Where did you lose your papers?

CAPT. B. (seeing bundles on ground). Are those your bundles?

RHO. Yes, they be.

CAPT. B. What's in them?

RHO. Our—our nightgowns, sir.

CAPT. B. Is that all?

REB. About all.

CAPT. B. I think I must examine them. (*Opens one.*) Ah, what have we here? (*Picks up book, and examines it carefully.*) Fairy tales! A girl of your age!

REB. Well, Rhody and me both said we'd take the thing we liked best, and I like that 'ere book. It's all the one I ever had, 'n' the stories are just fine.

CAPT. B. Well, I see there doesn't seem to be any papers in it.

(*Passes it to her. She does it up again. He tries to take RHO.'s bundle.*)

RHO. Please don't open it.

CAPT. B. Why not, my girl? Yours is quite a large bundle. Come, let me have it.

RHO. Well, come over where he can't see it.

(*Points to PRES.*)

CAPT. B. Nonsense. Give it up at once, or I shall keep you here when the rest go. (*Takes the bundle and opens it.*) Well, well, what have we here? A girl about to be married carrying a rag baby!

RHO. You let her be. She's all the plaything I ever had, and I'm a-taking her with me for a—a—hairloon. (*Angrily.*) And you needn't hold her upside down, if she is a rag baby. I'd a right to take her if I wanted to. She's mine! Marm made her for me ten years ago. You needn't go poking round her that way. 'Tain't none o' your business how her underclothes are made.

CAPT. B. (*who has looked the doll well over*). Well, she's all right, I presume. You see, I didn't know but you had papers about her.

RHO. Well, if I had a piece o' paper as important as that one you're a-hunting for, I wouldn't pin it to a doll baby's clothes, and I wouldn't 'a' lost it, nuther, same as you did! Now you just help me tie her up again afore Si sees her. Of all the bothering men, the Britishers are the worst!

CAPT. B. (*assisting her*). Take my advice, child, and play with your doll a while longer, instead of getting married. There! You won't take my advice, I suppose.

RHO. Hardly, sir. (*CAPT. B. goes back to tent.* RHO., *to PRES.*) Don't you tell the boys what's in our bundles, will you? 'Twas meaner'n dirt for that old Captain to open 'em.

PRES. What will you give me not to tell, a kiss?

RHO. (*throwing him a kiss*). Yes, I will. Catch it.

PRES. Hardly satisfactory. (*Men emerge from tent.*) Here come the rest of your party. Find anything, Hurley?

HUR. Pipes and tobacco, red bandannas, and a little money. Captain Blake says they're to go on.

JAKE. Yes, come on. I'm dry, and the rum's waiting.

ELLIS. So's the parson. Come on, Becky.

(*They pass out.*)

CURTAIN

SCENE IV.—*Washington's camp. Tent in background. As many Continental soldiers as one wishes may be used in this scene.*

(CAPT. ROBERTSON *is seated on a log. Enter MATTHEWS, another soldier.*)

MAT. There's a party of five back here, sir, who insist that they must see you, and at once.

CAPT. R. Who are they, Matthews?

MAT. Poor folks from the country, judging by their looks. Three men and two girls.

CAPT. R. Girls! Here! And they want to see me? Bring them along, Matthews. Let me see who they can be.

MAT. Yes, sir. (*Passes out, returns with party.*)

GIRLS (*running to CAPT. R.*). Father!

CAPT. R. My girls! Am I dreaming? How came you here? And Jack and Jake, and—can it be Jim Ellis?

ELLIS. It is, Captain. Alive and well again.

CAPT. R. So I see, old comrade, and glad I am to see it. Glad to see you without your sling, Jack. Arm well?

WIN. Well enough to come back.

CAPT. R. But why have you brought the girls here, Jack? It is no place for them, and I was coming home to-morrow night.

WIN. I didn't bring the girls, Tom. The girls brought me.

REB. And you mustn't come home, father. We came to tell you.

(GEN. WASHINGTON *comes from tent, and comes forward.*)

GEN. W. Ah, whom have we here?

CAPT. R. (*saluting*). My daughters, sir.

(*Introduces them.*)

GEN. W. I am happy and proud to meet the daughters of so good a soldier and patriot as Captain Robertson, but I did not expect to meet them here. And you, Winslow, back again as good as ever, and—Jim Ellis! We all believed you dead.

ELLIS. Not yet, sir; although I have been wounded and a prisoner since you saw me last. I bring dispatches, General. The young lady does, rather. She has them.

RHO. If father will lend me his pocket-knife, I will get them.

GEN. W. Take mine, little lady.

RHO. Oh, thank you, sir.

(She seats herself on a log, opens bundle, undresses doll, and proceeds to rip shoulder. Then she takes out some cotton, then the dispatches, which she hands to GEN. W. Meanwhile the conversation goes on.)

REB. You mustn't come home to-morrow night, father. They are going to capture you—and General Washington, too, if you come.

CAPT. R. How's that?

WIN. Burns has turned Tory, and ——

GEN. W. Not turned Tory. He has been Tory all along. He has been suspected.

WIN. A detachment of British got after Ellis, here, and his dispatches, but failed to quite lay their hands on either. Burns and Lee have laid plans to entrap you when you come home to-morrow, or rather to-night, as it is morning already. They will probably turn you over to the enemy.

ELLIS. So, to cover the escapade nicely, Miss Rhoda, here, planned another, and she and Miss Rebecca eloped with us.

REB. And the British captured us!

ELLIS. But being only country bumpkins, and lovesick idiots at that, they let us go after a while.

WIN. They searched us pretty thoroughly, though, first, and must have found the papers if Rhoda had not had them.

CAPT. R. Then they did not search the girls?

REB. Only our bundles.

CAPT. R. But the doll was in the bundle!

RHODA. Yes, father, and the British captain—Blake his name was—looked her over pretty thoroughly, but you see the papers were in her, not on her, so he found nothing.

CAPT. R. And Jake?

JAKE. Oh, I jest come to see them safely home to their mother. I was their foolish uncle, fonder of rum than of all the world beside.

CAPT. R. But you can't get back through their lines without the boys.

REB. No, sir, we are to stay at Mr. Burleigh's in Elmwood till mother sends for us.

GEN. W. Truly, yours was a very bright idea. Who suggested it, pray?

REB. Rhoda.

RHO. It was mother's idea to sew up the dispatches in the doll. Here they are, General Washington. (*Passes them.*)

GEN. W. (*taking them*). Thank you, little maiden. Ah, these are from our great benefactor, Robert Morris. You girls have not only saved to our country her commander-in-chief and three of his bravest soldiers. You have saved a large sum of money as well, which is sadly needed. Indeed, it would have been a great disaster had the enemy captured this. I am not sure but you have saved the army, and the noble cause for which we fight. (*Takes REB.'s hand.*) I am proud to know such patriots. (*Takes RHO.'s hand.*) And you, my child, your quick wit has saved an army to-night. I cannot thank you as you deserve.

RHO. Yes, you can, sir.

GEN. W. How, my little maid?

RHO. Let me kiss you, sir. I can think of no greater honor.

GEN. W. Indeed you may. (*She does so.*) And you, too, fair maiden, may I salute you in gratitude and love?

REB. The honor would be mine, sir.

(*He kisses her cheek.*)

GEN. W. I congratulate you, Captain Robertson, on your family of patriots.

REB. Patriots! We are only girls.

GEN. W. Whoever loves and serves his country is a true patriot, be it man or maid. A father with such daughters as you need not lament his lack of a son. I must go and read these papers more thoroughly now. I beg to be excused. Captain Robertson, you and your entire party will breakfast in my tent in an hour.

JAKE. Not me, General. I'm only a hired man.

GEN. W. (*taking his hand*). You are my true friend, and have served your country well. I shall expect you *all* in an hour. (*To RHO.*) Keep that doll carefully, my child, and pass her on to your descendants as a doll to be proud of—a doll that saved an army!

RHO. I will, sir, but I have a more precious treasure still to pass on—the memory of having been kissed by the great and good General Washington.

GEN. W. (*bowing*). Thank you, my dear. (*To REB.*) Thank you, too, my child, for what you have done to-night. Thank your mother for me also. (*To JAKE.*) And you, sir, be sure to tell her how proud I am to know such girls as her daughters. Meet me in an hour.

(He takes from his pocket a coin with a hole in it, and ties a bit of string in it, then throws it over doll's head, and passes on to tent.)

JAKE. And he really shook my hand! Mine! Jake Perkins's rough old hand! There's no one like our General.

CAPT. R. Indeed there isn't, Jake. With such a leader we are bound to succeed. Now, little daughters, tell me all about it.

(He seats himself on a log, drawing REB. to his side, and RHO. to his knee.)

ELLIS. Let me take that doll a few minutes, Miss Rhoda? I must show her to the boys. Truly, it is a sight well worth seeing—a doll decorated by the hand of our General—the doll that saved an army!

(He salutes the doll in military fashion, then takes her and holds her high as the curtain falls, the other soldiers saluting her as he holds her up.)

CURTAIN

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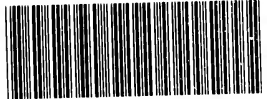
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